

Marlowe and the Fruits of Scholarism

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It was part of Marlowe's scandal that he was a university man. The fact, without the scandal, has continued to weigh upon criticism in our century. On the one hand, sheer factual problems about Marlowe's education must be settled before we can draw conclusions about the influence of that experience on his work. On the other hand, any such conclusions will rest on an arguable view of this education: "Protestant," "humanist," "scholastic" have become more elusive terms than they were (at least in Marlowe studies) a generation or two ago. In this essay, I would like to explore once again the "fruitful plot of scholarism" (to quote the prologue to *Faustus*) in Marlowe's imaginative landscape, especially in the light of evidence regarding his Cambridge education.

From 1580 to 1587 Marlowe lived a scholar's life within a discipline that is revealed in a strangely neglected document pertaining to his life at this time. This is one of the few bits of direct evidence concerning Marlowe's academic curriculum, other than the listing of his name in a logic class, which led F. S. Boas to wonder whether the poet had been sentenced to "live and die in Aristotle's work."¹ The document in question came to my attention from a summary in H. C. Porter's important book on English university life and religious thought, *Reformation and Reaction in Tudor Cambridge*. Porter's summary has not been noticed by Marlowe scholars, and the whole document is worth quoting. It is a plan of studies most probably drawn up by the master of Corpus Christi College, Robert Norgate, a few years before Marlowe's enrollment:

The exercises of Learning in Corpus Christi Colledge
in Cambridg every daye in the weke from the
beginning of the terme untill the ending thereof.

- On Mondaye after morning prayers, be red in the hall at vi of the clock, these thre Lecturs 1. Aristotles Naturall Philosophy.
2. Aristotells organon. 3. Seton whilch continewe for the space of one whole houre.
- At xii of the clock be red two greke lectures, one of construction, as Homere or Demosthenes. or Hesiod. or Isocrates. etc. The other. of the gram[m]mer
- At iii of the clock ys red a rhetorick lecture, of some part of Tully. for the space of an houre.
- At ii of the clock beynneth the schollers sophisme, whilch continueth untill 5
- On Tuesdaye be the same lecturs & exercise at the same houres.
- On Wednesdaye, after morning prayers in the chappell one of the fellows in his order handeleth some place of the scripture, wherupon he taketh occasion to entreat of some common place of Doctrine, the whilch he proueth by the scripture, & doctors.
- After the common place be the same lectures & exercise at the same houres as upon the former dayes.
- On Thursdaye after morning prayers, at vi. xii. & iii of the clock the same lecturs be red whilch be on the dayes before.
- At ii of the clock. A probleme for the Bachelours of Arts & generall Sophisters.
- On Frydaye after morning prayer A common place, as upon Wednesdaye,
At vi. xii. & iii of the clock. the same lecturs be red as before / At ii of the clock the Deane kepeth corrections;
At 5 of the clock doth beynn the fellows probleme in Diuinite whilch continueth ii hours.
- On Satterdaye after morning prayers at vi. xii & iii of the clock. the same lecturs be red as on the former dayes, At vi of the clock after supper doe ii bachelours or ii schollers declame.²

This comes from the same Norgate (no "Puritan," incidentally) who signed Marlowe's petition for the M.A. degree in 1587.³ The daily contact with Aristotle's *Organon* and "Seton"—John Seaton's *Dialectica*, one of the most widely used logic texts in the university⁴—might lead us to think that Marlowe was receiving a medieval, "scholastic" education. We now know, however, that logic or dialectic as studied at Cambridge was not an arid, abstract discipline, but the core of a liberal arts curriculum that incorporated a "humanistic" emphasis on classical texts.⁵ Clearly, Norgate's students would have learned the arts of language and logic from first-hand reading of ancient texts, at the same time discovering the philological complexities of Scripture. Above all, they would from the first study poetry and moral philosophy in Greek. So prepared, Marlowe would not, as Boas thought, have needed a Latin crib to read Musaeus' *Hero and Leander* (p. 18).

It was also a disputatious kind of education, not unlike that of Cambridge students centuries earlier. The "schollers sophisme" on Monday was a standard university debating exercise, and we know from Faustus' first speech to Valdes and Cornelius that the Thursday and Friday "probleme" was a question posed for academic disputation. On one of those Wednesdays or Fridays did Marlowe hear an exercise on the commonplace, "*Stipendium peccati mors est*"? Such oral exercises would have helped prepare the students for their B.A. degree, which required them to present two "responsons" and two "acts" in the public schools, as the university assembly place was called. In the responson a student would offer three propositions for defense against students from other colleges; an act was an oration on one of these propositions, with a response from each of the three opponents, concluding with comments from the presiding Master of Arts.⁶

The afternoon lessons in rhetoric and Cicero would have enhanced the humanistic tones of Marlowe's education, especially in his first year, when rhetoric was the focal study of the arts course. This course bears some resemblance to the trivium of the medieval university, with the important difference that it is not preparatory to some higher course of studies. It was medieval in that, in Mark Curtis's words, it "still tended to be primarily moral, literary, speculative, and authoritative rather than historical, scientific, and empirical" (p. 115). It was modern in that it was no longer simply the means for acquiring the higher learning of philosophy and theology, but had become an end in itself; as Curtis says, "Of itself, it instilled wisdom" (p. 123).

Yet the aims of learning were much disputed. Curtis has discovered that the conflict between the practical and spiritual ends of education had reached a crisis in Marlowe's time. Contemporaries often observed that young men were becoming "followers of Aristippus," "active rather than contemplative philosophers" (p. 128). In Marlowe's own works, I believe that this conflict is expressed repeatedly as part of the sixteenth-century struggle long ago recognized in M. M. Mahood's study: "Marlowe was acutely aware that he was living in an age of revolt, whose intellectuals were making the claims of self-sufficiency in innumerable ways. Marlowe may have shared in that revolt; but he had a clearer understanding than any of his contemporaries of its disastrous effects, and for this reason his tragedies record the disintegration of humanism."⁷ Marlowe is thus of two minds about the sufficiency of the knowledge offered by Cicero, Isocrates, and Homer.

Neither Protestant ideas nor the growing ranks of secular students in Marlowe's time had yet dispelled the dream of pure learning apart from

the world, despite the increasing defections to Aristippus. Walter Haddon, giving a Cambridge commencement speech in 1547, was dismayed to find scholars using their colleges as "a hiding place in which to remain wrapt in private meditations." When Martin Bucer arrived two years later he remarked on the number of fellows allowed residence in the colleges—in his opinion "so many monks and friars growing old in indolence and excluding needy and deserving students." The degree of Doctor of Divinity, it seems, then took eighteen to twenty years for completion.⁸ When Marlowe enrolled a generation later, vestiges of the old tradition surrounded him—the cloister-like buildings themselves, the round of morning prayers, oral disputation, and the emphasis upon divinity, as well as an increase in the power of those "monks and friars" of the resident colleges who had scandalized Bucer.⁹

A young landed gentleman might very well leave these surroundings with a lifelong devotion to learning, poring over his Scriptures as he took in his rents. A clergyman, of course, would value such learning. But for other talented youths of slender means, the class to which Marlowe belonged, Aristotle and Tully yielded little in material benefits.¹⁰ With a hint of irony Marlowe explains this depressing fact in *Hero and Leander*, when the god of wisdom tries to deceive the Fates by pretending to love them in order to win over a country maid. Once the duped sisters discover the truth, they very nearly banish Mercury to hell, decreeing

That he and Poverty should always kiss.
And to this day is every scholar poor,
Gross gold from them runs headlong to the boor.¹¹

The myth-maker speaks to a proverbial fact about scholars, but his moral is consistent with experience: there is no reconciling the ways of the world and the book. Webster presents Bosola as formerly "a fantastical scholar" at Padua before becoming an assassin. Robert Green died on the edge of starvation, and the two aspirants in *The Return from Parnassus* contemplate selling out to the Catholics in order to get by. One of the ironies of Faustus' story is that despite his worldly success the Fates catch up with this scholar as they did with most, Marlowe included—not to mention another scholar from Wittenberg who, like Marlowe, left his academic sanctuary for the bloody quarrels of men.

Even our slender knowledge of Marlowe's life supports the conclusion that he cherished learning, whatever his reputation with university officials. No one could have endured the six-day ordeal of Norgate's curriculum (and continue for an M.A. besides) without believing in the fruits of knowledge. But the belief in learning was always attenuated by the critical mind of the artist, and several of his plays consider the tragic

opposition between hope and actuality, between the life of the mind and that of the world.

Marlowe sets forth the archetype for this conflict in the story of Mercury and the Fates, exploring it most profoundly in *Doctor Faustus*. Other plays, however, touch upon the conflict between world and wisdom. Marlowe teases our thoughts in this direction with the minor character Baldock in *Edward II*. A protégé of the younger Spencer, Baldock sets out to “cast the scholar off / And learn to court it like a gentleman” (2.130-31).¹² The historical Baldock was in fact neither scholar nor layman, but a churchman who used his ecclesiastical status to get preferment at court, eventually becoming Lord Chancellor.¹³ Marlowe’s character has already learned the requisite hypocrisy and the contempt of formalities necessary to thrive among great men. He then becomes the center of a minor drama that unfolds, a sort of “scholar’s progress.” We next see him introduced to the king and promised a spot in the royal entourage; by Act 3 the promise is fulfilled when Baldock stands at the king’s side in the victory at Boroughbridge. By the end of Act 4, however, he has accompanied the king in his flight from the barons, ending at the Abbey of Neath, a setting that strongly evokes the life he once led. The scene in the abbey typifies the characteristic longing for the life of the mind at other moments in Marlowe. Edward addresses Baldock, with Spencer, as a former scholar:

come, sit down by me;
Make trial now of that philosophy
That in our famous nurseries of arts
Thou suck’st from Plato and from Aristotle.
(4.6.15)

The image of nursing conjures up more than the conventional idea of the alma mater. Edward’s actions imply that the contemplative life and the life of learning (in the abbey they would be characteristically fused) are the source of the soul’s strength. “Father,” he says, about to lay his head in the Abbot’s lap, “this life contemplative is heaven; / O, that I might this life in quiet lead!” The whole scene—the taste of joy and stillness before the violent reversal of the tragedy—recalls the return to the fold in the last act of *Doctor Faustus*. In this setting Baldock seems momentarily restored to his old condition. “Reduce we all our lessons unto this,” he says in his philosophic farewell: “To die, sweet Spencer, therefore live we all; / Spencer, all live to die, and rise to fall.” Like Mortimer’s wheel-of-fortune speech at the end of the play (which the imagery of rising and falling foreshadows), these lines suggest the speaker’s resignation at the climax of his own minor tragedy.

This is not to imply Marlowe's nostalgia for a lost intellectual or contemplative paradise, for Edward's praise of learning is tainted by the fact that it comes only as a last resort, after a battlefield defeat. The melancholy king's escapism resembles the feelings of Shakespeare's fugitive Henry VI, though it deserves less sympathy since Edward is wooing philosophy on the rebound. On the other hand, a sixteenth-century student like Marlowe may have known as much pride and envy in the university life as is found in Edward's court. The personified Peace in Erasmus' *Complaint of Peace* tries to find a home in the university, but her hope is vain: "In the same university logicians war with rhetoricians, theologians dispute with lawyers." Scotists, Thomists, Platonists, and Peripatetics "tear one another with taunts."¹⁴ To this inevitable rivalry of disciplines, Cambridge in the 1580s could add the embattled religious factions of the day. What the discourse in the abbey really presents is the futility of resorting to wisdom in a world that denies the congruity of mind and soul.

In *The Massacre at Paris* wisdom faces more blamelessly the cruelty of worldly power. Early in the play we hear that this power has already usurped the traditional institutions for cultivating the inner life. As Guise reports:

Paris hath full five hundred colleges,
As monasteries, priories, abbeys, and halls,
Wherein are thirty thousand men,
Besides a thousand sturdy student Catholics;
And more,—of my knowledge in one cloister keeps
Five hundred fat Franciscan friars and priests.

(1.2.80-85)

From *Tamburlaine* comes the rhetoric of big numbers—absurdly applied not to infantry battalions but to monks and scholars. With the Huguenots, on the other hand, learning is joined to piety. This spirit is manifest in the dumb show¹⁵ preceding the murder of the Protestants in the woods outside Paris (2.3), the stage direction reading, "Enter five or six Protestants, with books, and kneel together." The books, the devout posture, perhaps even the forest setting establish a contemplative atmosphere in striking contrast with the carnage that follows. A comparable symbolism of the book opens the earlier scene of Ramus' murder (1.7), as the ill-fated scholar ingenuously asks, "What fearful cries comes from the river Seine, / That fright poor Ramus sitting at his book!" This entire scene typifies the sacrifice of mind to power. It must have been to underscore this point that Marlowe unhistorically added the murder of two more scholars, the tutors of Navarre and Condé, to that of Ramus in this scene.

Like so many other scenes in Marlowe, this one suggests willingness

to sacrifice unity of plot for symbolic and sensational effect. Symbolically it communicates the same reverence for wisdom as the Abbey scene in *Edward II*. Ramus' composed attitude in this crisis, his refusal to flee (l. 6), and his final, dignified apologia (ll. 41 ff.) indicate a mind resting in the confidence of truth. We may compare Ramus facing death to the soldierly Agydas, in the scene where his would-be assassin enters with drawn dagger. Agydas declares that "words are vain where working tools present / The naked action of my threaten'd end" (*1 Tam.* 3.2.93-94). His suicide wins him "honor," as the witnesses say, but it is honor on Tamburlaine's terms. Ramus, on the other hand, retains his belief in words and discourse to the very end (Marlowe's intention is clear, I think, despite the garbled text of Ramus' last speech); his murder will be one of the great atrocities of this infamous day. Recent criticism has rightly silenced the complaint of earlier readers that the Guise-Ramus argument is a pointless digression. It is, rather, "a conflict of opposing natures—the authoritarian against the independent intellectual," serving "to establish through the person of Ramus an acceptable standard of humanity outside the two warring parties."¹⁶ Far from being shocked by Navarre's later defection from the Protestant side, Marlowe would have recognized it as consistent with the way of power and the world, unwilling to rest even in the most sacred truths.

In the phrasing of Sir Philip Sidney, Baldock and Ramus are willing and unwilling victims of the conflict between our "erected wit," the intellect that retains its capacity for knowing God, and our "infected will,"¹⁷ the active perversity that ends in self-destruction if unchecked. Marlowe's works are dominated by characters whose power of will often exceeds credibility—Mortimer, Barabas, Tamburlaine, Guise. In opposition to these titans, relieving this relentless energy of will, are momentary instances of intellectual virtue or of dedication to things of the inner life. In *The Jew of Malta* Abigail's choice of the cloister over her father's cruelty has affinities with this theme in the two plays discussed. In Marlowe's greatest play this opposition between world and wisdom comes to the foreground as the principal choice for the protagonist. Yet if we can say anything with certainty about *Doctor Faustus* it is that the choice is scarcely tragic. Read romantically (Faustus as Prometheus), the play supposedly rejects the stale bread of conventional learning and doctrine for the exhilarating narcotic of occult knowledge, forbidden power. Yet this reading collapses when we learn, beginning with the pranks on the Pope, the folly of Faustus. From then to the last, sad evening with his friends, there is nothing like the heroic flights of Goethe's Part II in evidence. His real choice has been to reject the (perhaps dreary) pursuit of truth guided by faith for a twenty-four-year binge as trickster and servant of darkness.

Doctor Faustus appears, as Curtis says, at a time when the practical and contemplative ends of learning were no longer recognized as one. It is consistent with the movements of reformation and humanism alike that Robert Norgate's students were to learn the managing of knowledge—hence the study of languages, the controversies over Ramist logic and rhetoric, the cultivation of “method.” Thus Cleanth Brooks is right to say that “*Doctor Faustus* is a play about knowledge, about the relation of one's knowledge of the world to his knowledge of himself—about the knowledge of means and its relation to knowledge of ends.”¹⁸ Marlowe's other Herculean heroes similarly neglect ends for means, but Faustus is distinctively a hero who should know better. The opening soliloquy puts the speaker's mind wholly in the service of the active life—narrowly construed, the world. Working backward from an acknowledgement of thought's legitimate end (“When all is done divinity is best”), Faustus dreams at last of being the emperor of the world, joiner of continents. The Chorus explains the terms of Faustus' choice in its concluding admonition to “the wise”:

regard his hellish fall,
Whose fiendful fortune may exhort the wise
Only to wonder at unlawful things
Whose deepness doth entice such forward wits
To practice more than heavenly power permits.

Contrasting the wise who wonder with forward wits who practice, these lines call to mind the Cambridge experience of the conflict between practical and contemplative. Practice or *praxis*, knowledge of means, entails dedication to the world, exemplified in Baldock's service at court. And “service” in almost all of Marlowe, especially *Faustus*, is an index of man's fate. Tamburlaine presents life wholly as a “choice” between absolute mastery and abject servility; Baldock first appears onstage in search of service now that his old master is dead; Abigail makes the classic choice between serving two masters. In Faustus' ironic service the spirit who should follow him actually leads him around for most of the twenty-four years. Our amusement at the Robin-Wagner travesties is partly due to our having to guess who parallels Wagner, the servant in quest of servants. Is Wagner like Mephistophilis ordering Faustus to serve him, or is Robin like the devil put to work serving a monstrous human ego?

“Christian” interpretations have often been too sectarian to be helpful. Is Marlowe a Lutheran Christian, a Thomist, a proto-unitarian? Recently, however, Judith Weil has established a sound context of Christian (as opposed to sectarian) ideas in the play, indeed in the entire Marlowe

corpus. She shows Faustus a victim of the "tragic folly" exposed in Erasmus' most famous tract against human pride—a case of "learned folly" that leads to greatness on "the great stage of fools" in the middle acts. Thus "the central irony of Marlowe's play may be that wisdom is available to Faustus before he tries to be demi-god, not after."¹⁹ So accurate is this judgment that I believe it can be used as a touchstone for good or bad readings of the play.

Marlowe presents a hero so suffused with the delights of learning that he becomes a voluptuary. In terms of the familiar Renaissance adage, his plenty makes him poor. Like John Earle's "downright scholar," "his mind is somewhat too much taken up with his mind, and his thoughts not laden with any carriage besides."²⁰ In other words, he has the scholar's penchant for thought over action, so that there was never really any question of his achieving the political power that he claimed to want. Joining continents, ruling nations: a strenuous, limiting sort of life. "Sweet Mephistophilis," he says at the height of his felicity, "let me be cloyed / With all things that delight the heart of men" (3.2.58-60). The Chorus at the beginning of Act 4²¹ says that "Faustus had with pleasure ta'en the view / Of rarest things" during his tours. Finally he will "glut the longing" of his heart's desire in the scene with Helen (5.1), where lust for a succuba aptly symbolizes the decay of delight in surfeit—again, plenty making poor.

One of the chief modes of learning in Marlowe's education, as we have seen, is disputation. King Edward thinks of such exercise as peculiar to the scholar's satisfaction when he encourages his companions at the Abbey to discuss philosophy with him. In *The Massacre at Paris* Guise will not permit Ramus to "declaim" with him on the merits of Aristotelianism, putting a brutal end to the scholar's discourse. Before falling into necromantic ways, the younger Faustus was known to his colleagues as the kind of disputant that excited his audiences—"wont to make our schools ring with *sic probo*" (1.2.2). Wagner's mock disputation with the scholars just after these lines (they are asking Faustus' whereabouts) reflects on the main characters much as do the comic conjuring scenes later on. Wagner's contentiousness, though, exemplifies one of two vices of scholars, the other being that he is "phlegmatic, slow to wrath and prone to lechery." No doubt he has learned both qualities from his master. His contentiousness reveals a self-advancing mind (envy, said Jaques, is the scholar's melancholy); yet this is paradoxically joined to sloth, preferring a life of delight to one of action. We may recall Bucer's "monks and friars" of the newly reformed Cambridge. Faustus sleeping under a tree and Faustus worshipping Helen serve to bear out this

characterization. Touring "the world" in the middle scenes, Faustus is immersed in the sources of concupiscent pleasure—banquets, wealth, gay society, theatricality—reminiscent of Spenser's Bower of Bliss and House of Busyrane. In the pointless dialogues with Mephistophilis, however, the edge seems to have gone off his talent for debate. As Professor Okerlund has shown, Faustus abuses both language and logic in his quest for knowledge.²² He thus forfeits claim to his old reputation—the sort of honor that was meant to shine briefly in Ramus' scene, and perhaps the only sort that a scholar can lay claim to.

Yet another reward is available for scholars, especially those in the kind of situation that prevailed at the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge, namely the friendship of like-minded people. A careful reading of the source shows that Marlowe has enhanced the collegiality in his hero's life. The *Faust-Book* hero is a loner, a perennial outsider; Marlowe's Faustus, we learn in the opening scenes, has been widely esteemed among his peers both as a friend and as a captain of knowledge in all its departments. The *Faust-Book* character, while a student, "being of a naughty minde and otherwise addicted, applied not his studies, but tooke himself to other exercises."²³ His examiners at Wittenberg, however, found that "none for his time were able to argue with him in Divinity," and reluctantly granted him his doctorate. Just after this he began associating with necromancers (pp. 2-3). In Marlowe's play, though, the solicitous scholars perceive their Faustus as a once-brilliant colleague on the skids (1.2). Their early expressions of concern prepare us for the last scenes of the play, which indicate the constancy of these old associates: after twenty-four years of feigning, the great man returns to his school and tells them, "I know your friendship is unfeigned" (5.1.19).

Before any more is said about Faustus' community of scholars, we should recall that the *Faust-Book* is set in a German university; Marlowe's play is nominally at Wittenberg, but the situation is more consistent with life in resident colleges at English universities. This is brought out in the last scenes. Faustus dies in his "study" according to the stage direction, not at an inn a half-mile from the university as in the *Faust-Book*. When he dies the other scholars seem to be in adjoining rooms (one of them, 5.3.10, hears Faustus cry out in the night), consistent with scholars' accommodations at a college like Corpus Christi. The *Faust-Book* hero lives in a house apart from the university which he wills to Wagner and which is later said to be haunted. Also the German Faustus seems more at home with students than colleagues (a sure sign of an academic pariah). One of his jokes is to blind temporarily two rival student gangs and entertain the others by having them fight each other (chap. 36). He keeps

a riotous Shrovetide and Ash Wednesday with "seven Students, and Masters that studied Divinitie, Iuris Prudentia and Medecina" (p. 96). This is probably the same crowd of undergraduates and graduate students that shows up at his last night's farewell-party—"Masters, and Batchelers of Arte, and other students more the which had often visited him at his house in merriment" (p. 122). Their love for Faustus seems more filial than fraternal as in Marlowe. After hearing him confess his devil-pact, the Students wondered greatly thereat, that he was so blinded, for knavery, conjuration, and such like foolish things, to give his body and soul unto the divell: for they loved him entirely, and never suspected any such thing before he had opened his mind to them: wherefore one of them sayd unto him; ah, friend Faustus, what have you done to concele this matter so long from us, we would by the help of good Divines, and the grace of God, have brought you out of this net . . . (pp. 125-26).

This passage probably suggested the affection of the scholars in the play ("for they loved him entirely"), but their speeches indicate that Marlowe's "scholars" are colleagues rather than "students" in our current sense. The Second Scholar relegates the "students" to an attendant position in his funeral plans:

Yet, for he was a scholar once admired
For wondrous knowledge in our German schools,
We'll give his mangled limbs due burial,
And all the students clothed in mourning black
Shall wait upon his heavy funeral.

(5.3.15-19)

The *Faust-Book* character was supposedly buried by the inn where he died. Here, what the Second Scholar has in mind resembles the conventional burial of a Cambridge scholar in the parish church to which the college belonged (had he died at Corpus, Faustus would have been buried at St. Bene't's)²⁴.

Throughout his scenes the Second Scholar in particular speaks as Faustus' peer and closest friend. Such friendships were encouraged as vital to the intellectual life of the colleges at Oxford and Cambridge, even in written regulations, like the stipulation that scholars should go on a daily walk with a single companion, "conversing with each other in pairs on scholarship or some proper and pleasant topic."²⁵ Early in the play the Second Scholar reveals his closeness to Faustus: "Were he a stranger, not allied to me, / The danger of his soul would make me mourn" (1.2.34-35). Toward the end Faustus tells him, "Ah, my sweet chamber-fellow, had I lived with thee / Then had I lived still" (5.2.30). The fidelity of the hero's colleagues over twenty-four years is an important detail in the texture of the play. After so long a time, Faustus' return in Act 5 to the same university, the same friends, seems to sharpen the irony of his

predicament, the university being a place where mutability and feigning seem less potent than outside the walls. Although no one displays the ideal wisdom that we need to see to understand the hero's folly, it is partly disclosed through its effects—the durability of the “study,” the loyalty of the friends, whose simplicity denotes an unworldly way of life.

The scholars are not without an egregious self-contentment, however. If Faustus and Marlowe both forsook the scholar's life, it may well be owing to this limiting feature. The life did not finally measure up in practice. There is a certain dullness or complacency about those three colleagues in Acts 1 and 5; one of them, most likely, speaks the smug epilogue to the audience. Although vastly entertained, they seem unable to understand Faustus' aspirations, let alone sympathize with them. It is likely that these simple souls are drawn from the poet's own experience. The English scholar of his time was, after all, a clergyman, and even if Marlowe did not hold the radical religious views attributed to him, we can well imagine that he would have shared, say, Milton's dislike for the humiliations of clerical existence. Partly underlying Faustus' tragic rejection of the contemplative for the active life is the fact that, as Kearney points out, the whole edifice of Marlowe's university represented social and intellectual control, not liberation: “The object of education within the colleges was to produce intellectuals and gentlemen who could be relied upon in a world constantly threatened, it was thought, by revolution” (p. 22).

There was, of course, nothing new in the identification of scholar with cleric. In that respect English universities remained medieval rather than modern. It may be doubted, then, whether Marlowe believed there had ever been a time the practical and spiritual ends of learning had been one. In *Hero and Leander* the temporary union of Mercury and the Fates, of wisdom and destiny, does bring back the Golden Age, but the very unlikelihood of this union makes the myth all the more susceptible to a tongue-in-cheek interpretation. The opposition between mind and soul may not be a sixteenth-century condition so much as a human one. Judith Weil has rightly described *Faustus* as a “tragedy of mind,” in which the hero's losses (of “scholarism” and the “laurel bough”) are tragic only “if the learning itself has dignity and value on earth” (p. 52). For her the tragedy almost fails because it seems itself to deny the value of human reason (p. 80). Yet in a sense this is the stuff of tragedy, for Hamlet and Oedipus also subvert the knowledge that is their strength. The folly of Doctor Faustus needs to be seen in the context of details in other plays reflecting a frustrated search for wisdom. We should not, moreover, underestimate the capacity of Marlowe's education for producing both the ideals and the frustration that would make this his theme.²⁶

NOTES

- 1 Frederick S. Boas, *Christopher Marlowe: A Bibliographical and Critical Study* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), p. 16.
- 2 Norfolk Record Office MSS NRS 23372 Z.99. I am grateful to the Norfolk County Archivist, Jean Kennedy, for advice on this document and for permission to quote it. H. C. Porter, *Reformation and Reaction in Tudor Cambridge* (Cambridge U. Press, 1958), pp. 50-51 describes the plan of studies. "Construction" (under Monday) seems to mean "construing" or "interpreting" (OED). Norgate's signature appears on several official documents of Corpus Christi College in this bundle, so even though there is no signature on this plan of studies, it is probable that this was the plan in force during his tenure as Master (and thus throughout Marlowe's Cambridge years).
- 3 Boas, p. 21, attaches the Puritan label. Porter, however, says that Archbishop Parker brought in Norgate to replace a Cartwright sympathizer, Thomas Aldrich, at Corpus. Norgate later married the daughter of Parker's half-brother (pp. 149-55).
- 4 Seaton's *Dialectica* first appeared in 1545, and was frequently reprinted, later with a commentary by Peter Carter. See Mark H. Curtis, *Oxford and Cambridge in Transition 1558-1642* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), p. 284.
- 5 See Lisa Jardine's excellent monograph, "The Place of Dialectic Teaching in Sixteenth-Century Cambridge," *Studies in the Renaissance* 21 (1974): 31-62; also her "Humanism and the Sixteenth Century Cambridge Arts Course," *History of Education* 4, no.1 (1975): 16-31.
- 6 John Bakeless, *The Tragical History of Christopher Marlowe* (Harvard U. Press, 1942), 1:69.
- 7 M. M. Mahood, *Poetry and Humanism* (Yale U. Press, 1950), pp. 86-87.
- 8 James Bass Mullinger, *The University of Cambridge from the Royal Injunctions of 1535 to the Accession of Charles the First* (Cambridge, 1884), pp. 96, 120, 121.
- 9 Curtis, p. 42, says that after 1570 the heads of colleges became the chief governing body of the university.
- 10 On this subject, see Hugh Kearney, *Scholars and Gentlemen: Universities and Society in Pre-Industrial Britain 1500-1700* (London: Faber and Faber, 1970), pp. 15-33.
- 11 *Hero and Leander*, (1.470-72), in *Marlowe's Poems*, ed. L. C. Martin (London: Methuen, 1931).
- 12 All quotations from the plays, except where indicated, are from J. B. Steane, ed., *Christopher Marlowe: The Complete Plays* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969). I use the traditional spelling of "Mephistophilis," however.
- 13 *Edward II*, ed. H. B. Charlton and R. D. Waller (London: Methuen, 1933), p. 108, n. 30.
- 14 *The Complaint of Peace*, in *The Essential Erasmus*, trans. John P. Dolan (New York: New American Library, 1964), p. 181.

- 15 See H. S. Bennett, ed., *The Jew of Malta and The Massacre at Paris* (London: Methuen, 1931), p. 212. (Scene 9 in this ed.)
- 16 John R. Glenn, "The Martyrdom of Ramus in Marlowe's *The Massacre at Paris*," *Papers on Language and Literature* 9 (1973): 365-79 (pp. 373, 377).
- 17 Sir Philip Sidney, *An Apology for Poetry*, ed. Forrest G. Robinson (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1970), p. 17.
- 18 Cleanth Brooks, "The Unity of Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*," rpt. *Marlowe's Doctor Faustus: A Casebook*, ed. John Jump (London: Macmillan, 1969), p. 210.
- 19 Judith Weil, *Christopher Marlowe: Merlin's Prophet* (Cambridge U. Press, 1977), pp. 52-53. Cf. H. W. Matalene, III, "Marlowe's Faustus and the Comforts of Academicism," *ELH* 39 (1972): 495-519: Faustus "is not 'Promethean' because Marlowe does not present him as the *inventor* of magic. Rather, it is made clear that Faustus is merely 'dropping out' into the established 'counter-culture' of his particular time"—i.e., necromancy (p. 509).
- 20 John Earle, *Microcosmography* (1628), ed. Harold Osborne (London: University Tutorial Press, n.d.), p. 49.
- 21 Steane ed., p. 593, notes that this speech, appearing only in A, is intended to introduce Act 4, though it appears at the point corresponding to B's 3.3.
- 22 A. N. Okerlund, "The Intellectual Folly of Dr. Faustus," *SP* 74 (1977): 258-78.
- 23 *The English Faust-Book of 1592*, ed. H. Logeman (Gand: Librairie H. Engelcke, 1900), p. 1.
- 24 My acquaintance with Cambridge burial practices is indebted to correspondence from Mrs. D. M. Owen, Keeper of the Archives of the University of Cambridge.
- 25 James Bass Mullinger, *The University of Cambridge from the Earliest Times to the Royal Injunctions of 1535* (Cambridge, 1873), p. 374, citing the statutes of Canterbury Hall and St. John's College.
- 26 I wish to acknowledge the helpful advice of Professor Judith Weil and the assistance of a grant from the General Research Fund of the University of Kansas.